

Wendover Junior/Senior High School 110 Wildcat Blvd. P.O. Box 610 Wendover, Utah 84083

March 23, 2006





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Wendover Junior/Senior High School 110 Wildcat Blvd. P.O. Box 610 Wendover, Utah 84083

March 23, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 23, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Wendover Junior/Senior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Steven Lawrence is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Wendover Junior/Senior School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Wendover Junior/Senior School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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WENDOVER JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

School Administration				
Steve Lawrence		Principal		
Counseling				
Kenneth Castagno				
Support Staff				
Karen Floyd	Concurre Concurre			
<u>Faculty</u>				
Burke, Joseph Bushman, Carolyn Carter, Clayton Gregg, Mary Ann Henderson, Kathryn Higley, Dale	Mangum, Peggy Mascaro, Kathryn Northrup, Rusty Ringholz, Joseph "Michael" Rowley, Alan	Stewart, DeAnna Stewart, Gordon Smyly, Joseph Tanaka, Julynn		

WENDOVER JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Wendover Junior/Senior High is to provide the educational tools to improve our students' future

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can learn.
- A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among students and staff members.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Schools need to function as a learning organization. WHS promotes opportunities for all those who have a stake in the success of the school to work together as a community of learners.
- Students learning needs are the primary focus of all decisions impacting the work of the school.
- Students need to demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

- Dr. John Goldhardt, Principal, Snow Canyon Middle School, Washington County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson
- Paul O. Hansen, Principal, Olympus High School, Granite School District
- Dr. Janice Jones Schroeder, World Language Specialist, Multicultural Education, Salt Lake City School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

WENDOVER JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Wendover, Utah is located on the border between Utah and Nevada approximately 120 miles west of Salt Lake City. Early fur traders found potable water in what is now Wendover, and it became an oasis for travelers crossing the deserts of Utah and Nevada. In the last century Wendover has become home to a railroad maintenance facility and an Air Force training base. Today, most of the residents of Wendover are employed in tourism, gambling, or associated services in Wendover, Nevada. Others are employed in ranching, farming, maintenance for the Union Pacific railroad, air and truck transportation, and mineral extraction.

Many residents are immigrants from Mexico and Latin America. The Ibapah Goshute Reservation is located 65 miles south of Wendover. Native American students from the reservation ride a school bus for over an hour each way to attend school at Wendover Junior/Senior High.

Wendover Junior/Senior High School is a culturally diverse seventh through twelfth grade school of 182 students. Seventy-three percent of the students are Hispanic, 7.5 percent are Native American, and 19.5 percent are all other categories. Seventy-seven percent of Wendover's students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The most significant finding the school's improvement. The data indicates that graduation rates have steadily increased, and the number of students passing the UBSCT has increased dramatically. Survey data also indicate the climate is more positive and students feel more connected to the school.

The greatest change in the profile compared the visit three years ago is in the school's attitude toward the idea that **all** students can succeed. There is a more pervasive belief that minority and poor students are just as capable as the rest of the students.

What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Continue to disaggregate all data and use that data to drive instruction.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Monitor and share achievement data often.
- Continue to work communicate with the Goshute tribe leaders.
- Keep track of instructional strategies that are used during the process of increasing student achievement to see which strategies are having the greatest impact upon improvements.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?
 - It was evident to the Visiting Team that collaboration took place in the self-study process. Parents, students, and teachers were all involved with the process. It is difficult to get parental involvement in Wendover, but the school has made great strides in getting the parents' perspective.
- b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The self-study is honest and reflects an accurate picture of the school. Stakeholders were invited to participate in the process, and they were informed about the results.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Wendover Junior/Senior High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

Students will be responsible citizens

Indicators:

- Use appropriate strategies to solve conflicts
- Understand and respect rights of self and others

Students will demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making across the curriculum and in daily life

Indicators:

- Ability to set goals, evaluate progress and request help as needed
- Ability to solve problems and make healthy choices

Students will be able to express thoughts and ideas through verbal, written and artistic media and be able to listen, read and understand the communication of others

Indicators:

• Mastery of UBSCT, Six Traits, and other mandated assessments, art, and music projects and other curriculum-related projects

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?
 - Following the accreditation visit three years ago, the school initiated a self-study. As a result of the self-study, a mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs were developed. The school has made a sincere effort to involve stakeholders, but all stakeholders have not been engaged in the process. Parents of Native American students feel that more communication between the home and school would be one way of helping parents become informed about the school's activities, goals, and mission. None of the Native American parents the Visiting Team communicated with had received the NSSE survey to complete related to the self-study. The Visiting Team would recommend that the school work with the tribal leadership of the Ivapaw Reservation to explore the use of technology to enhance educational opportunities for students and to enhance communication between the home and the school.
- b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?
 - The Visiting Team found that Wendover High School has developed its belief statements. The belief statements do reflect a commitment on the part of the staff to work to ensure student achievement. The Visiting Team recommends that continual efforts be made to involve all stakeholders as the school improvement process continues to move forward.
- c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The Visiting Team found that Wendover High School's belief statements and DRSLs in general do align, but there needs to be additional alignment of both DRSLs and belief statements with the school action plan. DRSLs also need to be stated in outcomes.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The Visiting Team found ample evidence that content is based upon the Utah Core Curriculum standards. Although most departments have no more than two people (many have just one), the staff as a whole as made collaboration a priority. They meet together often to discuss content and the means to help students achieve.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

Students and teachers have a very close and nurturing relationship. Respect and courtesy flow both ways. Teachers seem to create a positive and friendly atmosphere in the classroom and elsewhere in the school. Cooperation between teachers and administrators is also very commendable.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

There was evidence of variety in instruction for students. Examples included lecture, cooperative learning, student performance, student oral presentations, and guided practice. Based upon the number of diverse learners in the school, it may be wise for the school to focus more upon cooperative learning structures.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

As noted, there is variety in the use of instructional strategies at Wendover. However, there is not enough variety to meet the needs of the many, many diverse learners in the school. Improvement efforts in this area have occurred, and we commend the school for those efforts. It would be wise for the school to continue

this effort and effectively implement research-based instructional strategies that will help more students achieve at higher levels.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

Care and resources have been given to provide additional time and support for students who are struggling. The greatest advantage that Wendover has in this area is its size. Teachers and the principal know all of the students and the students' families. Due to its location, Wendover has taken advantage of EDNET courses and online courses to add variety to the curriculum.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The school's renewed emphasis on and attention to core standards, has also allowed it to utilize assessments as a data source. The Visiting Team found evidence of a variety of assessments to help guide improvement efforts. Examples include classroom tests, quizzes, and projects, as well as state assessments such as the CRTs, DWA, ITBS, and UBSCT.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The school is in an emergent state in this category. The staff and leadership are beginning to design direct alignment between assessments and core standards. This process will be strengthened if the staff is trained in designing effective formative assessments that are aligned with content standards and can be used to drive instruction.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

The leadership team found no evidence of the unfair use of assessments. Assessments are fair and equitable.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The Visiting Team found ample evidence that the leadership is providing a focus on student academic achievement. This evidence included graduation data, UBSCT data, dropout rate data, CRT data, classroom observations, and interviews with the principal, counselor, teachers, parents, and students.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

Since the last visit, the school has been actively involved with effective professional development that has included research-based strategies to enhance student achievement. Teachers are collaborating about what they teach, whey they teach it, and how they can improve it.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

Assessment data is collected often and analyzed as a means to improve the school. This appears to be working, based upon the data showing improvements in content, graduation rates, and UBSCT scores. The Visiting Team reminds the school and the school leadership that this process will be even more powerful if the staff completes formative assessments that can be used to drive instruction.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The students at the school are polite and respectful and interact well with one another. The Visiting Team believes that the school is managed in an effective manner.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources, which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

There is emerging evidence that resources are being aligned with the mission, beliefs, DRSLs and action plan goals. The Visiting Team encourages the principal to continue and strengthen this practice.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The teachers and the staff meet together and collaborate together often. The Visiting Team was pleased with the principal's monthly trips to the Goshute tribe to meet with tribal leaders about the school. He also meets with Hispanic groups

and casino owners to discuss the learning needs of the students, the principal at Wendover, Nevada High School, and the school community council.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team found evidence that Wendover High has made an effort to enhance the working relationships among the administration, staff, and students. The school provides training for both staff and students each year in aspects of sexual harassment. The Visiting Team found that students seemed to relate well with one another and with their teachers. The school conducted the NSSE survey as part of the self-study. As a result of the study, strengths and weakness as perceived by students and parents were noted. The Visiting Team also noted that teachers were not included in the survey, and recommends that the teachers be given a yearly opportunity to assess school strengths and weaknesses and to work with the school administration to address areas of concern.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The Visiting Team was impressed with the efforts being made to work collaboratively with all stakeholders. Parents of Native American students, however, often felt left out of the loop as a result of their distance from the school and the lack of effective communication between the school and the home. The Visiting Team recommends that the school work with Tooele School District, the State Office of Education, and tribal leadership to identify ways of involving Native American students, particularly those who live great distances from the school.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

Since the accreditation team's last visit, there have been large gains in this area. The staff has received REACH training, sheltering strategies training, and so forth. The professional development that has occurred has been effective and has provided the impetus for further improvement and growth. The Visiting Team reminds the school that the process will be much more effective and bring about far greater gains in achievement if a professional development plan is designed that aligns with the school improvement plan.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

It was obvious to the team that under the school's current leadership, there is a culture for continuous improvement and change for improving student achievement levels. Teachers are encouraged to learn and grow and to look at research-based best practices.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Wendover Junior/High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Wendover Junior/High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Wendover Junior/High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The action plan is adequate in that it addresses what is required to accomplish each step, who is responsible, when it will occur, and data needed to show that it has been accomplished.

- b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school wide and system wide?
 - Most of the teachers seem committed to the action plan, and there is support and guidance from the Tooele County School District in accomplishing the plan.
- c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school wide action plan appear to be?

The monitoring process is sufficient. The follow-up steps are clearly outlined in the action plan.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Wendover Junior/Senior High for completing the process in an appropriate manner and for addressing and remediating the recommendations from the previous site visit.
- The Visiting Team commends Wendover Junior/Senior High for dramatic improvements in student academic achievement, including state assessments and the UBSCT, and improved graduation rates.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for making efforts to reach out and involve the community.
- The Visiting Team commends Wendover Junior/Senior High for allowing the community to utilize its building and its library.
- The Visiting Team commends Wendover Junior/Senior High for participating in professional development and for focusing on strategies that enhance learning and competency.
- The Visiting Team commends Wendover Junior/Senior High for using data as a tool to enhance learning and improve teaching.

- The Visiting Team commends the school leadership for leading school reform and for focusing on student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for completing REACH training and trying to implement its principles.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Wendover Junior/Senior High reword the DRSLs so that they are written as an outcome, and that the school design indicators for the DRSLs so that they can be more easily assessed.
- The Visiting Team recommend that Wendover Junior/Senior High design and implement a comprehensive, job-embedded professional development plan that is fully aligned with the school's mission, beliefs, DRSLs, and action plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all teachers and administrators complete an ESL endorsement. This process should be job-embedded and completed with an accredited institution so that the USOE will recognize the endorsement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that data be continually disaggregated, that there be a focus upon formative assessments, and that the data from formative assessments be used to drive instruction
- The Visiting Team recommends that teachers be surveyed annually in the same manner that students and community are surveyed annually.
- The Visiting Team recommends that enhanced communication to all parents about student achievement levels be communicated often.
- The Visiting Team reminds the school that this is the beginning of a journey toward school improvement. It is a means and not an end.